

# EXHIBIT 1

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## Letter | Words are not enough

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Nov 22, 2023

**A**fter the horrendous attacks on the state of Israel on Oct. 7, President Jim Ryan on Oct. 11 issued a statement to the entire community condemning the violent attacks against the Hamas. Taken at face value, I could not have asked for a better statement. Realizing that I am in a pluralistic university that safeguards free speech, I can not expect Ryan to have gone further on his conviction of the terrorists in the Gaza Strip. In comparison to other universities and even news outlets, Ryan had done what is, sadly, unprecedented by agreeing to call the actions of Hamas “brutal terrorist attacks.” In that short phrase, I, as an Israeli, was relieved to see that the University of Virginia’s administration aligns itself with Israel and against Hamas. His email even details the victims of Hamas’ attacks, children and innocent, and the bombastic, vulgar words describing the act of terrorism encapsulate the event perfectly. Ryan does not diminish the severity of the crime that took place and, even more so, calls for the university to “condemn the actions of Hamas and the horrific violence.”

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## **Calls for peace and protest at UVa rally for Palestine**

Jason Armesto

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However, the student body, and even many professors, have contradicted Ryan in their actions. Shockingly, after Hamas atrocities, I started coming across countless Palestinian flags. As a supporter of a two-state solution, I never have problems with that flag. My issue was the juxtaposition of putting a flag outside in solidarity after the attacks. There is no issue with standing in solidarity with innocents, but waving a Palestinian flag in support of Hamas is unacceptable. Furthermore, the Students for Justice in Palestine organization, or SJP, proclaimed the attack as an “unprecedented feat for the 21st century.” They then organized a studentwide walkout in the middle of the day, which I came to counterprotest. What I was shocked to find was that not only had professors attended the walkout, they also encouraged students, many of whom have never even visited the Middle East, to show their support.

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## **Protesters, counterprotesters clash at UVa over Israel's war in Gaza**

Jason Armesto

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The Jewish community and I had written to the administration questioning the university's support of this action. The response we received was that the SJP was acting under their right to free speech. In my view, commending Hamas' actions is not an act of free speech. If one would have commended al-Qaida's attack in 2001 as an “unprecedented feat,” I assure you they would have been expelled under the administration. Furthermore, as a counterprotestor on the day of the walkout on the steps of the Rotunda, I undoubtedly did not see an honorable use of freedom of speech. The First Amendment does not protect speech directed to incite or producing imminent lawless action. Not only were all the members encouraged to wear masks to

cover their faces, a felony in the state of Virginia, but they had used countless slanders against me, calling me a Nazi, a murderer and encouraging me to come down so they could “teach me a lesson.” While I am incredibly grateful for Ryan’s statements, I did expect some action to be taken against encouraging terrorist sympathizers.

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### **Spanberger defends support for Israel in tense exchange with UVA student**

Jason Armesto

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Unfortunately, due to the violent vocality of the SJP, Jews across campus are not encouraged to express their opinions. They fear antisemitic threats and condemnation from their professors and friends, and they are justified. Antisemitism is an issue on campus that must be eradicated. Before Oct. 7, I was called by two members of this community, identifying as Muslim, as “bloodthirsty” and an “enemy.” In fact, only an hour ago, before writing this, I went out for lunch and was shouted at: “Free Palestine, you filthy Jew.” If the SJP can feel secure enough to demonstrate their views on campus, but Jews are unable to due to fear, that is a problem.

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### **'Family and friends, murdered, injured': Hundreds gather at UVA to mourn bloodshed in Israel**

Jason Armesto

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I am incredibly grateful for Ryan’s statements. He, the administration, and many professors, mine included, have shown unwavering support to the state of Israel and their students. The number of emails I have received from my professors, administration members and even Charlottesville community members offering their unwavering support must not go unnoticed. It truly warms my heart. However,

Ryan's words must be complemented by explicit action to minimize attacks on both Jews and Muslims. If the administration is against the acts of terrorism from Hamas, they must not just say it but demonstrate it.

**Matan Goldstein**

First-year University of Virginia student